



Cabinet 3 December 2008

Capital Programme (Dec 08/14)

1. Summary and Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.1 The capital schemes currently under development are varied and at different stages in their development process. Some schemes relate to maintenance or renewal of the Council's existing assets whilst others aim to provide new facilities or develop key areas of the Borough in accordance with the Council's adopted priorities.
- 1.2 This report details those projects which are at a stage where they are ready to be approved as part of the Capital Programme. A description of each project is contained in the attached appendices.
- 1.3 Cabinet's approval is sought to recommend the expenditure to full Council on 9 December 2008.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that in respect of the Nowton Park Visitor Centre project, Cabinet determine its preferred option of either:-
- (i) Scheme A
 - (ii) Scheme B; or
 - (iii) the suggested variants to both of these Schemes,
- as detailed in Appendix 2 to Report Z386.
- 2.2 Subject to the approval of full Council, funding for the projects detailed in paragraphs 4.2.2 to 4.2.8 of Report Z386 be approved, including the preferred option from Appendix 2 as detailed in 2.1 above, and the Council's Capital Programme be amended accordingly; and
- 2.3 Following approval of capital funding for the Bury St Edmunds Community Football Project, as detailed in paragraph 4.2.8 of Report Z386, the Corporate Director for Community be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Sport, to enter into an agreement with Bury Town Football Club to develop the project on a grant funded basis, subject to:-
- (i) final approval of the Scheme being sought from the Cabinet;
 - (ii) the granting of planning permission for the Scheme; and
 - (iii) third party matched funding being secured.

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3. Corporate Objectives

3.1 Together with supporting several of the Cabinet's Commitments, the Community Strategies for Suffolk and West Suffolk and the Council's long-term vision (Vision 2025), the recommendations meets all four of the Council's Corporate Priorities as contained within the Corporate Plan:-

- (a) *'To raise standards and corporate efficiency';*
- (b) *'To improve the safety and well being of the community';*
- (c) *'To secure a sustainable and attractive environment';* and
- (d) *'To create a prosperous local economy'.*

4. Key Issues

4.1 Background

4.1.1 For a district council, St Edmundsbury has a noteworthy record of delivering successful capital projects. The current Capital Programme (which extends from 2008/2009 to 2012/2013) amounts to £54 million. The majority of this spend will take place in the current (2008/2009) financial year (£23.5 million) and next year (2009/2010) (£13.7 million).

4.1.2 The Programme is constantly being reviewed and updated, and there are always a number of 'pipeline' projects, which are in the early stages of development, and have not yet had funding allocated to them.

4.1.3 A small number of these 'pipeline' projects are thought to be important enough to bring them forward into the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 Capital Programme.

4.2 The Proposed Projects

4.2.1 The projects are briefly described below, with a more detailed description and cost implications in the attached appendices. As illustrated, these projects relate mainly to the sensible maintenance, renewal or improvement of the Council's existing assets. Where they involve the provision of new facilities or redevelopment of the public realm, they are entirely consistent with the adopted plans and priorities of the Borough Council.

4.2.2 West Suffolk Athletics Track: An additional £50,000: Appendix 1 attached.

This project is already part-funded, with £200,000 in the Capital Programme for 2008/2009 (although due to the timing of the refurbishment the works may not take place until the very beginning of 2009/2010). The additional funding is to meet the potential full cost of refurbishing the track.

4.2.3 Nowton Park Visitor Centre: Appendix 2 attached.

Council-owned Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds is enjoyed by significant numbers, but has limited facilities. Customers have consistently given us feedback that they would like to see these facilities improved. The funding is to replace the existing wooden structure with an improved visitor centre, café and education room. Two options are available, which are set out clearly as Scheme A and Scheme B in Appendix 2. Both of these options also contain an additional variant, which are also detailed in the appendix.

4.2.4 Abbey Gardens Play Area: £200,000: Appendix 3 attached.

The play area in the Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds attracts a substantial amount of visitors, but is now both dated and in need of regular maintenance. Abbey Gardens is not only the most popular park in the Borough, but also one of the most popular in the country, and the improved play area would be more in keeping with the quality of the Abbey Gardens.

4.2.5 Abbey Gardens' footpaths: £130,000: Appendix 4 attached.

The footpaths in the Abbey Gardens are very well used, and are now in need of repair as a result of that heavy use.

4.2.6 Town Centre Public Realm Works: £500,000: Appendix 5 attached.

The town centres in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill have both been considerably updated during the last 18 months, and this sum is to continue this work in a number of key remaining streets/areas.

4.2.7 Hollands Road Employment Units Refurbishment, Haverhill: £445,000.

These units provide opportunities for small businesses in Haverhill to grow and develop in a relatively cost effective and supportive environment. The units are now in need of refurbishment, and as the units become vacant this sum will fund a planned programme for their refurbishment and modernisation. The principle of this investment was approved by Cabinet on 23 October 2008, subject to the Asset Management Plan process (Report Z304 refers). Further details of this scheme are provided in Report Z391, '*Asset Management Plan: Haverhill Industrial Properties: Assessment and Options Appraisal*' also contained on this agenda.

4.2.8 Relocation of Bury Town Football Club from Ram Meadow to Moreton Hall: up to £1 million: Appendix 6 attached.

The Bury Town Football Club (FC) ground is located at Ram Meadow adjacent to the public car park in Bury St Edmunds. The football ground at Ram Meadow requires significant capital improvement to achieve league ground standards compliance. The cost of ground improvements to modern standards would be in the order of £750,000. The site has only one grass pitch which limits the number of games that can be played, training on the site and revenue generation potential. There is no room for expansion to provide further pitches that football demand in the town requires. The Council is in possession of an 11 acre site at Moreton Hall allocated for recreational use as part of the terms of a 'Section 106' development agreement. Relocating Bury Town FC to this site would enable the development of a community football club facility. This new Bury St Edmunds Community Football Project would develop senior, junior, women's and girls' football teams and mini-soccer through effective engagement with the local football clubs and community, therefore increasing the provision of recreational facilities for the Moreton Hall area.

5. Other Options considered

- 5.1 The planned projects could be left unfunded at the current time, for separate consideration at a later date; however this would hinder the development of these schemes.

6.	Community impact <i>(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and diversity issues)</i>
6.1	<u>General</u>
6.1.1	A number of the projects have been developed at the request of members of the public, for example, the Abbey Gardens Play Area and the Nowton Park Visitor Centre. All projects have been selected for their importance to a cross section of the community, or for their importance in regenerating parts of the Borough, for example, the Hollands Road Employment Units Refurbishment.
6.2	<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>
6.2.1	Where appropriate, Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on individual projects.
7.	Consultation
7.1	The schemes are consistent with the priorities and strategies of the Council, developed in consultation with all Councillors, including Members of the scrutiny committees, and stakeholders. The Council's priorities also reflect specific consultation exercises such as 'Suffolk Speaks'. In relation to this report, the proposals have been discussed with the Corporate Management Team and the Portfolio Holders for Resources and Efficiency; Culture and Sport; Transport and Planning; Economy and Asset Management; and Community. Where appropriate, further consultation will be undertaken with affected communities.
8.	Resource implications <i>(including asset management implications)</i>
8.1	Since they are all existing 'pipeline projects', the proposals in this report do not represent expenditure that the Council was not planning over the coming years, simply the bringing forward of that expenditure to meet the current needs of the community at the earliest opportunity.
8.2	The specific schemes listed in this report, total a maximum of £2,850,000 including the amount referred to in Report Z304. For every £1 million of capital expenditure undertaken, the Council loses up to £50,000 in revenue through lost interest. However, during 2009/2010 and 2010/2011, the interest rates expected on the Council's investments have been projected at 3.5%, indicating a loss of interest of £35,000 per £1 million. If approved, the financial impact of the lost interest will be built into the Council's budget setting process for 2009/2010 (and subsequent years) to ensure that the impact on local taxpayers is carefully managed and sustainable. At the current time, it is envisaged that the cost of financing the schemes can be accommodated without any <i>additional</i> impact on the level of Council Tax in future years.
8.3	Several of the schemes are designed to maintain the use of, and financial returns from existing facilities, for example, the industrial units. However, in terms of generating new revenue expenditure or income, the only project that may have an impact is the Nowton Park Visitor Centre, where it is possible that different staff arrangements will be required, although intended that any extra costs will be offset by increased income generated by the Centre.

9. Risk Assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
The council already has a substantial Capital Programme (note in 4.1.1 above) and these additional projects would put further demands on our capacity to manage the additional and overall programme	Medium	The projects have been costed with this concern in mind. Officers have confirmed that they have the capacity to take on these extra projects.	Low

10. Legal or policy implications

10.1 There are no legal or policy implications.

Wards affected	All	Portfolio Holders	Resources and Efficiency, Leisure and Culture, Economy and Asset Management
Background Papers	Cabinet 23 October 2008 (Report Z304)	Subject Areas	Economy, Leisure, Sports, Arts, Culture, Environment and Finance

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Appendix 1 - Refurbishment of West Suffolk Athletics Track.

Background

The existing athletics track sited at Bury Leisure Centre since its completion in 1997 has proven to be a well used facility. However it is now at the point of requiring significant refurbishment to the surface. The inner two lanes require urgent resurfacing and the outer six lanes will require the same in the next couple of years. Rather than continually take the track out of public use for further works, the intention is to carry out the refurbishment of all lanes simultaneously.

In addition to the track lanes there will be repairs to the inner and outer field surfaces such as the javelin run up and long jump run ups. In addition upgrading is required to the hammer and discus safety cages.

Proposals

There are two options for the resurfacing work (each using a different type of material) and both will be tendered for. If both are within the budget allowance preference will be given to the material with the longer life expectancy.

It is important to ensure the recertification of the track by UK Athletics, the sports governing body hence it is necessary to resurface the entire track.

This is particularly the case in that the track is on the list of the 2012 Olympics as a training facility.

In consultation with the major users and in order to minimise disruption to programmes, the works will be undertaken during a period of 8 weeks commencing in April 2009.

Cost

The estimated cost of the works is up to £250k. This is £50k greater than the sum currently identified in the approved capital budget for outdoor leisure facilities. This sum allows for an element of contingencies which reflect the unknown condition of the sub base.

Appendix 2 - Nowton Park Visitors Centre, Bury St Edmunds

Background

The park opened to the public in 1989 and is now the second most visited park owned by the council, after the Abbey Gardens, with visitor figures of 350,000 every year. In 1993 temporary buildings were installed to support the growing visitor numbers and these are now overdue for replacement with a more suitable permanent facility. A health and safety audit of the buildings in 2006 identified a range of restrictions that reduced the opportunity to extend service provision as desired by visitors.

The current temporary facilities are:- public toilets, changing rooms (to serve the three sports pitches on site), shop that sells gifts and refreshments, office and information point. Customer surveys carried out in 2001, 2004 and 2005 consistently identify as the top priorities the need for a cafe and improved toilet facilities.

In addition there is an identified need for a multi-purpose function room that will improve service delivery to local schools for Environmental Education this will also allow for a wet weather option to the current education programme. The room could also be hired out to local community groups for a variety of functions.

Partners in Play for Suffolk also have highlighted the benefits an under-cover play space incorporated into the design would bring.

Proposal

The scheme has been designed taking into consideration the above and the desire to have a building that fits into the park environment.

Scheme A consists of a single storey structure incorporating a multipurpose room (education or café) which could accommodate seating for 40 chairs and tables or 50 in lecture configuration seating, shop, offices, and a covered play area. The building will be constructed of timber frame with an open truss and rafter roof. Externally the walls will be finished in weatherboarding and a timber roof covering. Overall the net internal area will be approximately 140m² which compares to 65m² for the existing building.

Scheme B is as above, but incorporating a separate room for the education activities which would result in approximately 215m² in total, an increase of 75m² on Scheme A. It has the advantage of having a separate education room and café, thus increasing the service to the public and removing the need for constantly rearranging the furniture.

Additionally, each scheme could incorporate changing rooms to replace the existing changing rooms, which have a predicted lifespan of five years. In effect, incorporating changing rooms would 'futureproof' the building, by avoiding having to carry out a replacement of the changing rooms in 5 years' time.

Cost

In order to minimise expenditure the changing rooms will be reused as these have a serviceable life in excess of 5 years. Additionally the temporary toilets in Risbygate Street (one unit plus the accessible unit) which were purchased at the commencement of the Cattlemarket Development will be re-sited at Nowton Park. After remodelling one unit and minor refurbishment these will meet the service requirement. The cost of this element is approximately £20k.

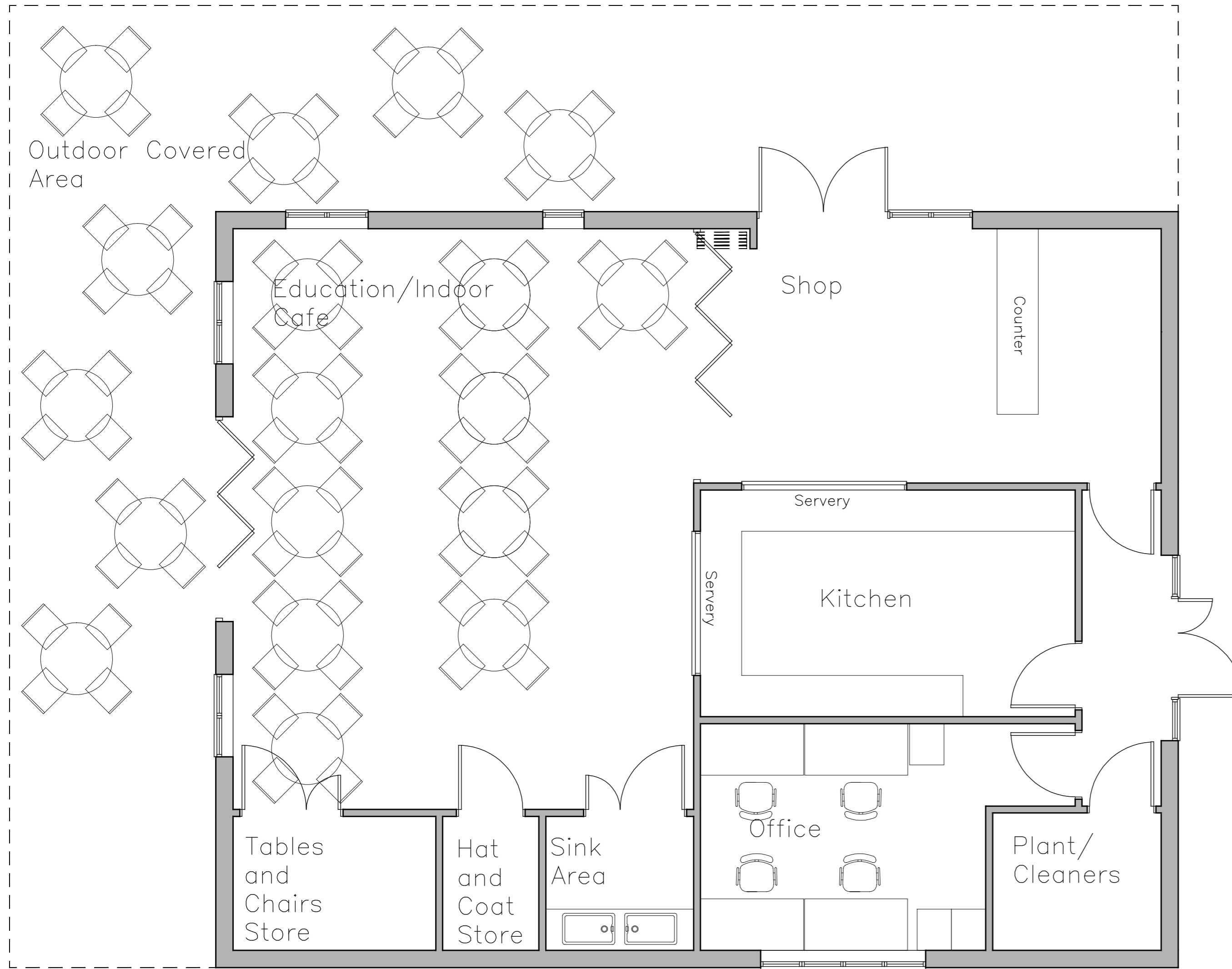
The total cost of scheme A (attached as Appendix A) based on the project on a construction date of 3Q 2009 is provisionally estimated to be £300k, which includes the re-siting of the toilets.

The total cost of scheme B (attached as Appendix B) is provisionally estimated to be £375k (also including the re-siting of the toilets).

An additional £150,000 would be required to incorporate the changing rooms into either option.

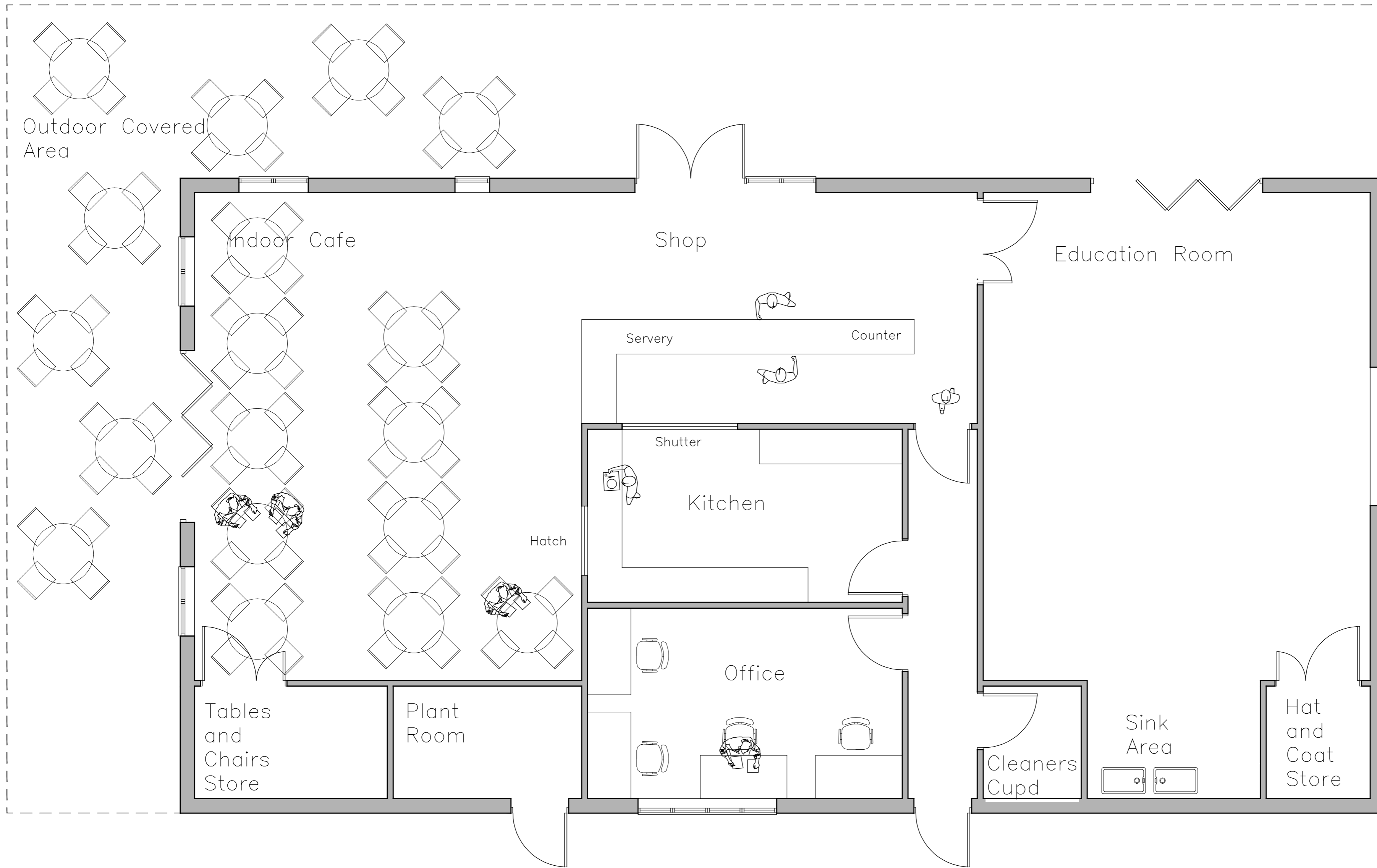
In summary:

	Main Scheme Cost	Additional cost to include changing rooms	Total cost with changing rooms
Scheme A	£300,000	£150,000	£450,000
Scheme B	£375,000	£150,000	£525,000



NOWTON PARK VISITOR CENTRE
Scheme A

Scale 1:50



NOWTON PARK VISITOR CENTRE
Scheme B

Scale 1:50

Appendix 3 - Abbey Gardens Play Area, Bury St Edmunds

Background

The Abbey Gardens receive around 500,000 visitors a year of which approximately 20% are estimated to be aged under 16.

The current play area is equipped with a range of equipment that has been installed over the last 30 years, and at the time of its installation was at the leading edge of children's play and safety standards. The Parks Service has received a number of complaints in recent months concerning the current play provision in the park.

The equipment is ageing and not meeting the needs and expectations of residents and visitors.

Proposal

Indicative plans for a new playground in Abbey Gardens have been obtained which take into consideration the need to create a play facility which is safe, challenging and interesting.

Play is critical to children's development it's a key element in learning to appreciate, assess and take calculated risks, which is fundamental to the development of confidence and abilities. The proposed play facility in Abbey Gardens will provide a stimulating environment which balances risks appropriately.

Abbey gardens is a Grade 1, Ancient Monument Site, consent for the installation of a new playground will, therefore, need to be obtained from English Heritage prior to any construction works commencing on site.

Officers will work closely with English Heritage to ensure that the proposed playground facility does not adversely impact on the historical significance of the site.

Costs

The cost of delivering the proposed play ground facility is £200,000.

Appendix 4 - Abbey Garden Footpaths.

Background

The Abbey Gardens are the most frequently visited council owned facility with estimated annual visitor numbers in excess of 500,000. The condition of the paths within the Gardens is varied and with no programmed maintenance works being undertaken over recent years, they have now reached a point where many are unsafe and form trip hazards. The most serious of these is around the Rose Garden and immediate action has been taken to address this risk.

Proposal

It is proposed to remove the top 40mm through machine planning and relay with dense rolled tarmacadam approximately 75% of the existing paths. These will be of a similar material and finish to those remaining although there will be a slight colour variation due to ageing. The opportunity will be taken to standardise on edging details; all works will be undertaken in consultation with English Heritage.

Cost

The remaining works will be tendered with commencement on site in February. These are estimated to cost approximately £105k in addition to the immediate works to the Rose Garden which are in the order of £25k.

Appendix 5 – Town Centre Public Realm Works

Background

The Borough Council has long recognised the need to maintain and develop a high quality public realm as a means of promoting the economic vitality and viability of the main commercial centres of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. St Edmundsbury together with Suffolk County Council and private sector partners has invested in a series of improvements to the public realm in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill in recent years. In the last 18 months schemes have been undertaken in Kings Road and St Andrews Street South in Bury St Edmunds and Jubilee Walk in Haverhill. There are also emerging schemes in Queen Street, Haverhill and Central Walk, Bury St Edmunds.

In Haverhill the Borough Council has developed a Masterplan for the town centre. In the short term the concern is the integration of the existing town centre with the proposed Tesco store. The developing strategy for Queen Street goes a long way to establishing the links to the new store. In addition traffic flow along Swan Lane/Camps Road is a potential barrier within the existing retail area and options to encourage pedestrian flow through this area need to be developed. A further consideration is the link between the recently opened cinema complex and the town centre. A scheme to refurbish the bus station in this area is a further important step in this process, but other links to the High Street are in need of improvement.

In Bury St Edmunds there is a need to continue the work of integrating the existing and extended town centre, and provide an attractive environment to encourage people to visit and stay. Some funding is already available for works to the junction of St Andrews Street, Brentgovel Street and Risbygate Street, however this junction is not being considered in isolation, but in the context of adjoining streets. An important issue is the need to protect and promote the secondary commercial streets in the town, especially as these are the location of many small and independent traders. There is also active consideration being given to the environmental enhancement of Parkway, particularly the section between Risbygate Street and Kings Road.

Proposal

The emerging public realm works in Risbygate Street, St Andrews Street North and other areas in the vicinity of the Cattle Market development in Bury St Edmunds and the Queen Street and High Street areas in Haverhill are important to the long term health of the retail areas. Additional funding to provide an attractive environment, in particular for pedestrians, is important to protect the economic success of both main towns.

Cost

A capital budget of £500,000 has been identified as the likely base cost of the emerging schemes. This will provide more flexibility in developing appropriate solutions and may act a catalyst to attract other funding sources.

Appendix 6 - Bury St Edmunds Community Football Project

Background

The Bury Town Football Club ground is located at Ram Meadow adjacent to the public car park. The site could provide additional car parking space and is on the route of any future link road from the St Saviour's junction to the Ram Meadow car park. The site could also be useful as a potential location for any future park & ride service for the town centre.

The ground at Ram Meadow requires significant capital improvement to achieve league ground standards compliance. The cost of ground improvements to modern standards would be in the order of £750,000. The site has only one grass pitch which limits the number of games that can be played, training on the site and revenue generation potential. There is no room for expansion to provide further pitches that football demand in the town requires. The lack of any possible potential football participation improvements precludes any external funding investment for the Ram Meadow ground. In addition, investing in ground improvements may not be appropriate given the potential transport developments which may have benefits for the town's economy.

Proposal

The Council is in possession of an 11 acre site at Moreton Hall allocated for recreational use as part of a 'section 106' development agreement. Relocating Bury Town to this site would enable the development of a community football club facility. This new community football club would develop senior, junior, women's and girls' football teams and mini-soccer through effective engagement with the local football clubs and community; thus increasing the provision of recreational facilities for the Moreton Hall area.

The facility would have two floodlit pitches; one grass first team pitch and one full size top specification artificial pitch, together with club house, changing and stadium facilities. The provision of a community facility of this kind in Bury St Edmunds has been identified as a priority by the Football Association and also as a site for funding support by the Football Foundation.

It is proposed that new facility would be developed by and leased to Bury Town FC and senior representatives of the Club have indicated strong support for this proposal. If it went ahead, the project would be funded by grant support from the Council and football funding sources, together with funding from the club. Any confirmation of grant funding would be subject to satisfactory resolution of a range of crucial matters including, scheme design, community engagement plans, football development and business plan approval and planning approval.

The scheme would use a significant proportion of the 11 acre site; however it may be possible to develop additional community recreational facilities on site for the benefit of the Moreton Hall community. The scheme design would be undertaken in consultation with Ward Members and local residents.

Cost

The potential total cost of this facility is up to £2 million, dependant on the final scheme design. The Football Foundation has indicated that funding is available on a matched basis towards eligible costs for the community football club element of the scheme. Therefore the maximum cost to the Council if the scheme progresses is £1 million. Following allocation of this funding within the Future Capital Programme it is proposed that the Council enters into an agreement with Bury Town FC to develop the scheme on a grant funded basis subject to the scheme's final approval, planning approval and third party funding being secured.